1:Campbell E-5 (1954-1955)1964
EH14 Sarakatsani EH14
Zagori

593 The close intimacy between a mother and her children finds a different expression according to the sex of the child. A mother with her daughters is on terms almost of camaraderie as together they tackle the heavy domestic responsibilities of their sex. Between mother and son, because of the opposition of their sexes, there is some abruptness, especially during those years when the son is trying compulsively to behave in a masculine manner. But their relationship is none the less close, unconditional acceptance of her son and his deeds by the mother, protective concern on the part of the son for his mother. To take in vain the name of a man's mother is to offer him the worst possible insult. The bond between mother and son is [562] indestructible. She gave him life; in him she fulfils herself and transcends the moral inferiority of her sex. Although a mother is more in the company of her daughters, it is the sons who are closest to her heart. They are her pride and the significant achievement of her life.

593 I have said that the mother plays a role expressive of the 152 solidarity of the family. A Sarakatsanos sometimes says that 'The mother is the heart of the family'. Any kind of breach in the physical unity of the family distracts and worries her. After the first few years of her marriage, a wife shows less eagerness to pay visits to the family of her birth. She begins to fret and agitate to return after only one or two days' absence from her home, particularly if she has not brought all her children with her. For the first days after a daughter's marriage or a son's departure on military service a mother is inconsolable. Squatting by the hearth and rocking back and forth on her haunches, she maintains a continuous low moaning broken only by bouts 593 of deep sobbing. It is the wife or mother who is the leading 764 mourner at the death of a husband, son, or daughter. For the 152 twenty-four hours which intervene between death and burial, she does not leave her position at the right of the head of the [563] corpse. During this time she is the chief singer of dirges (μοιρολόγια) in which she recites the golden qualities of the dead man or woman. But for the most part, she expresses her grief in simple and terrifying screams of lamentation (σκούζει), while she and the other women beat their breasts and tear at their 593 hair and cheeks (μαδιώνται). For a son a mother remains in 765 full mourning for five years whereas a father does not continue

from the grave and haunts the folds and blights the pastures.

A recent unpublished source casts new light on the obscure drama of nomad marriages. I have mentioned in reference to the Mani the sword which, by sympathetic magic, is said to cleave asunder the bonds of fear and shyness between the two married strangers when they are finally alone together. In Sarakatsán embraces, a blade plays a still more immediate role. Alone in the hut, lying on cut branches padded with blankets — for there is never a bridal bed or a sheet and only the strictest minimum of undressing — the groom, with a sudden masterful swoop, leaps athwart the bride, seizes her by the scruff of her neck, and with bared teeth and burning eyes, lays the edge of a dagger at her throat. Most strangely, this time-honored stratagem works; timidity boils up into hot blood on either side, confusion is ripped to shreds, the dagger is flung away, and the union is driven home and fiercely clinched in a lightning tussle.

The nomad approach to all feminine physiological troubles is primitive, deep, and dark. They never undress — all exposure is anathema to them — and there is some truth in the village rumors that they never wash. Oddly, they scarcely smell at all, perhaps because of the time-stiffened carapace of clothing which encases them. The author of the unpublished material I have already mentioned was present at the death of an old Sarakatsánissa. There was no undoing the thick geometric livery in which she was cocooned, so it was torn open with a knife, sending the bystanders reeling back like the people depicted on icons at the Raising of Lazarus. When she marries, a girl is no longer a member of her own family, and sometimes she never sees it again; she is a slave to her husband and his womenfolk, a stranger in strangers' tents. It was the rule in the stern old days that no wife should address her husband in the first years of her marriage; he, in his turn, would never call her by name; and many years and many births had to pass before they would converse in public.

Charon, Death, is a permanent presence and the most natural of companions. A nomad who perishes in the mountains goes unhouseled and unaneled. If he should die on the road — and the nomads' two yearly migrations, geared to the slow gait of the flocks, may take twenty-five or thirty days — he is laid across a pack beast, and after the body is unloaded, a candle is lit for him three evenings running and a cup of wine placed "for his soul to drink from." If a *tsellingas* falls mortally ill, the bells are muffled; and if he dies, all the animals, even the bellwethers, are disarmed in mourning. When men turn fifty and women thirty, all the nomads, however hale they are,

764 travel with their *nekrallaxia*, or death change — a
[961] new suit of clothes to be buried in. A body is laid, clad in this new attire, pointing away from the sun on the floor of his hut or his tent, with his hands and feet bound together. Kinsmen watch over the dead all night, lest a dog, a cat, or a hen should walk over him. Finally the body is wrapped in a woolen blanket or two goat's-hair cloaks and then borne away to burial on a bier of branches. As he is carried out, somebody breaks a wooden spoon, and no one looks back, for fear of Charon, who lurks behind them in search of fresh prey.

In the old days, they buried the body without a priest — "he died unchanted," the phrase goes. Before the earth covers the body, his hands and feet are unbound and his clothes are torn, so that he may move more freely "to where he is going." If a shrine were handy, there they would lay him; but a shepherd who died in the mountains was buried below a rock or on the top of a slope, whence he could look down on his flocks, should they return another year. His crook was planted nearby, and a woman's grave was marked by her
[301] distaff with its spindle and thread. She was buried with all her rings and chains and earrings
765 and her festival array of gold coins. When her
[171] relations went to dig her up again, after three, five, or seven years, to translate the bones in a box or a bag (as they do all over Greece), these trinkets were retrieved and washed and handed
[275] on to the children. Occasionally the bones of the skeleton are found to be rigid, "not to be cut"; this means that the deceased has turned into a vam-
[289] pire. It calls for priestly intervention and exorcism, and the body is left for another year to loosen up. Mourning for a dead son lasted for five years, and to emphasize this sad period, women would sometimes wear their clothes back to front. The two traditional hours of the day for the renewal of lamentation are sunset and the dim hour before daybreak, when the first crows begin to caw.

000 All this is a far cry from Daphnis and Chloë, a long, long way from Theocritus and Moschus and Bion. The shepherds of Vergil are further off still, early milestones on a flowery path that meanders through Herrick and Watteau and Fragonard to the Petit Trianon and Sèvres. The attributes of the Good Shepherd in the New Testament are as irrelevant as the virtuous and rather simple image that the shepherd's calling conjures up in the West.

181 Shepherds who never leave the plains have little interest. But those of the mountains are active, lean, spare, hawk-eyed men, with features that strike one as having been scooped out and chiseled

/250 cont./

844 602 [114]

animals may walk. According to Madame Hadjimichali, (3) the burial takes

3. Ibid., A.I. p. ???. ---A statement that our own observations have not permitted us to confirm.

place under the very hearth of the hut. No glance, especially not a male one, must fall on the placenta at that moment.

764

A practice of parallel significance is found in death customs. The deceased is laid on the ground on a velentza until the moment of burial. And in order that his soul should find rest and forgiveness of men and God, [775] [262] "the cake of the dead," the kolyva is prepared on a plate from grains of wheat boiled in water. It represents the body and is likewise placed in the ground.

842 [789] [825] [128]

Finally, we must mention again the viper head which the spouses wear as an amulet.

If we have presented all these practices without comment it is because we intend to discuss them all together.

842 821 823 825 831 392

What stands out first of all when we consider them is that the Sarakatsani appeal to the moon, the earth, the fire and the snake--personifying the forces whose common trait is their favorable influence on fertility. All four represent the source of life: the moon "living and inexhaustible in its own regeneration...and the source of universal fertility"; (4)

4. See M. Eliade: Traité, pp. 145, 148 and the bibliography. /?previously/ mentioned.

the earth, mother of all; (5) fire, symbolizing rejuvenation and immortality; (6)

5. See G. Samter: Geburt, p. 2 f., M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 223.

6. See H. Jeanmarie: Dionysos, p. 387.

the snake, image of the moon, which regenerates itself by shedding its skin, (7) and which resembles the phallus. (8)

7. G. Van der Leeuw: La religion, p. 67.

8. M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 152.

842 /250 cont./
821 By wearing them or coming in contact with them one benefits from their
823 virtues.
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825

/251/ In practice all this is interpreted as follows: the decoration
531 of the skirt and the bride's cake serve as the lunar amulets. Giving birth
262 on the ground and in the posture in which the ancient goddess of birth
585 Eilithyia /Artemis/ is shown insures for the child the advantages which
844 come from contact with the earth. (9)
876

9. See B. Nyberg: Kind und Erde, p. 207 f.--Birth by proximity, according to M. Eliade: Ibid., p. 265.--Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 119.--Monolina Marconi: Riflessi mediterranei /Mediterranean reflections/, p. 254 f. p. 254 f.--Marie Delacourt: Stérilité, p. 31 f.

844 The placenta which has nourished the child until then returns to the earth
854 where a new life will rise again (10)

10. G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 45.

(the position of the deceased directly on the ground and his commemoration by means of the grain which is buried and comes to life again symbolize the same life cycle). (11)

11. J. Przyluski: La grande déesse, p. 124 f.--G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 87.--P.M. Schuhl: La formation de la pensée grecque, p. 211.

372 The healing, invigorating fire which makes mortals immortal and which is
844 born from two pieces of wood representing the two sexes, (12)
842

12. G. Van der Leeuw: Ibid., p. 49, also citing Ad. Kuhn: Die Herabkunft des Feuers und der /sic--should be: des/ Göttertranks, p. 64 f.

protects the mother who gives birth in front of it, as well as the newborn child. (13) Moreover, it encourages a new impregnation by the burial of the

13. W. Mannhardt: Antike Wald und Feldkulte, p. 503.

/332 cont./
the people who attended the service and who must make prayers conforming to the wishes of those who organized the ceremony.

Let us note that the killing and common consumption of a lamb are required on two other occasions, marriage and baptism, and that, in addition, the same practice is found in the funeral customs of which we shall speak later on.

The explanation of these customs is very simple. Semantics is very useful to us on this point. To indicate the solemn putting to death of the lamb, the Sarakatsani use the Turkish word courbani or the Greek thusia which means "sacrifice."

At first glance one might be tempted by the hypothesis that the term "sacrifice" has merely an economic meaning--/333/ the death of any animal representing a privation for the herder. This interpretation, very incomplete if not biased, is inadequate.

The context in which the sacrifice takes place suggests three hypotheses: the sacrifice is first of all an offering to divine forces. It is also a gift to an outside visitor. Finally, it is an immolation bound up with certain circumstances of transition.

One fact among those we have mentioned is particularly revealing in connections with the ideas determining these customs. It is the offering of lambs to the church because of a vow or under pressure of a serious illness. In both cases a life is offered to ward off the threats against existence and to safeguard the life of the group or of an individual. There is here an exchange of potentialities which ethnography and the history of religions have known for a long time.

The offering of a life to ensure a favorable outcome in new situations originates from the same concern. The immolation of animals at the time something new materializes, for example, the foundations of a new house is known in Greek custom. And in Hellenic folklore there is a

-/335 cont./

128 764 We shall divide the description of the funeral customs of the Sarkatsani in accordance with the different aspects of the layer in question.

SOCIAL ASPECT OF FUNERAL CUSTOMS.

763 LAYING-OUT AND LAMENTING THE DECEASED.--MOURNING.

[602] At the moment of the death struggle only close relatives have the right to assist the dying one. The others withdraw in order to give him the opportunity to express his last wishes to those close to him. This is a matter between the family group and him alone.

764 When the dying one has breathed his last, the laying-out is begun. 593 If a young man is involved, his mother, his father, his brothers, his 604 cousins and his uncles undertake it. If it is a married man, his wife [605] is added to the persons just metioned. If the deceased is a young girl, it is her mother, her sisters, her father and her aunts who take part. If it is a married woman, her husband assists the other members of the family.

764 As we see, the choice of persons who have the right and the duty to 834 undertake the laying-out of the deceased, hence to see and touch the nude corpse, follows the rules which, while he is alive, permit or forbid close and intimate relations with persons of the opposite sex. Evidently, it /336/ is a rule based on "modesty," but which, in reality, is based on the rules of marriage and the functions of kinship that are familiar to us.

764 Unmarried persons are dressed in a wedding costume, for it is [589] shameful to die unmarried. Funerals then become a marriage with the earth! (12) Married individuals wear their best outfit.

[171]

12. This is an idea and a custom very widespread throughout Greece. Antigone, condemned by Creon, laments that she must die celibate.

/336 cont./

764 Next, a white velentza (blanket) is spread out in the center of the hut, the deceased placed upon it, his eyes are closed and his feet tied with a rope so that "he will not shift in his grave," actually so that he will not become a ghost! (13)

13. M. Eliade, in Images et Symboles, p. 146, footnote 57, says, citing Frazer: La crainte des morts, /The fear of the dead/ pp. 53-59, that it is always as defense against the spirits of the dead that corpses are tied up, although the significance of this custom is more complex.

With regard to his position on the ground we refer to what was said elsewhere (pp. 276-278). Then the attendants place themselves around him and [533] the women, without distinction of age, status of kinship, commence to [152] weep loudly and sing the mirolia (special songs, often improvised) while tearing their hair, beating their breasts and sometimes scratching their [602] cheeks. The next of kin must weep more than the others. The intensity and sadness of the lamentations are in inverse proportion to the age of the deceased.

765 The same is true of mourning. If the deceased was a young person, mourning lasts three to five years. If it was an old person, only one year. An old Sarakatsani woman told us that after the death of her elderly husband she did not replace the red blankets which were part of the decor of her hut with black blankets, for her companion had lived his life and she had her children.

[822] Black is the color of mourning. The women no longer wear embroidered [302] garments, the men put on black shirts and let their beards grow. The [291] mother of the deceased and the widow wear mourning for life, the first [178] because "a mother is never consoled for the loss of her child," the second because "she must be in mourning forever for her spouse."

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765 152 626 [562] Obviously, all these manifestations are social and not religious. They are based on the social control of feelings, the regulation of their intensity and their externalization. /337/ A widow's mourning is the external mark of her status, since, as we have said, the status of the woman must always be apparent. And if she mourns for life it is because the loss of her husband means for her, and in the scale of Sarakatsani social values, an inestimable loss which she must forever regret.

775 MAN IN THE BEYOND.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.--GHOSTS.

The Sarakatsani believe that after death man continues to live, but an existence as different from earthly life as from that assumed by Christianity.

The soul lives spiritually, but also anthropomorphically. And the dead person may become a ghost. The idea of resurrection exists. But for the Sarakatsani the cycle of life complies more with non-Christian beliefs.

775 764 On the mouth of the deceased a silver coin or a trinket is placed, so that he has the wherewithal to pay his passage to Hades--a reminiscence of the ancient practice of paying Charon to cross the Styx. If he does not have the means of paying, he will be destined for the nether regions.

Next to the corpse, and again on the basis of non-Christian beliefs, are placed cigarettes, apples, oranges, candy, combs, small pocket mirrors, etc. These objects will serve for his own use in the beyond. The fruits are gifts for those who died before him, and the donors add oral messages or messages written on pieces of paper. However, if the deceased is old, these objects are not placed on his deathbed. Next to men, their shepherd's crook is placed. Next to women, their distaff.

/337 cont./

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[152] Flowers are laid on the corpse.

One must sit with the deceased and weep over him all night, "so that he will not get up." (14)

[171]

14. There is a very ancient belief, already found in Homer, according to which the dead person would be deprived of rest if he were not treated in conformity with the death rites. The threne /dirge?/ was part of the ritual; the description of the obsequies of Hector, in the XXIVth book of the Iliad, where Andromache, Hecube and Helen perform the funeral dirge in turn, testifies to this. In this description we recognize the same ambience as in Sarakatsani funerals Analogous ideas occur in the chant of Gilgamesh, see K. Birket-Smith: Histoire des Civilisations, p. 377. Charon refused to transport to Hades the souls of abandoned dead. This explains the Sarakatsani conviction cited above, that the dead person who does not pay his passage is destined for the nether regions.

[152] [182] The funeral chants, therefore, not only express /338/ the sadness of the relatives; they have a function to fulfill, that of ensuring the repose of the deceased. Between the living and the dead there is an interdependence. Tha actions of the first are capable of influencing the fate of the second, for good or ill, for their eternal rest or for their damnation.

The dead person is likewise in danger of becoming a ghost if a man of an animal passes over him, if hands are clasped above the corpse when condolences are offered or if a cat enters the death hut. Satan may [776] [825] take advantage of this to pass over the body of the deceased and take possession of his soul. The cat, as we know, is often considered an

764 /338 cont./
775 incarnation of the devil. In these ideas we see reappearing the postulate
[776] of representation which determines magic action.
[825]

The same danger, in the form of chastisement, awaits the dead
775 person "if his life has not been correct." In this case it is no longer the acts of the living which will affect the fate of the deceased, but his own actions which will bring baneful consequences. We are not in a position to give an explanation concerning the expression "correct life" since our informants did not choose to be specific. Let us recall,
[596] however, the example cited in the context of the economic life of the extended family (pp. 174-175).

771 These ideas about ghosts and eternal rest are foreign to Christianity,
775 according to which everyone will be judged after his death by the Supreme Judge and will be punished or rewarded according to his actions and not by virtue of the action of others. However, there is one point in
[764] Christianity which establishes a certain solidarity between the living and the dead: the forgiveness which the living address to the dead, either individually or collectively, in the course of the funeral service. We
[182] believe that this point forms the bridge linking Christian beliefs and ancient beliefs about solidarity, and permitting syncretism. As for
775 ghosts and the idea of becoming one by way of punishment, the Saraktasani,
764 as well as the clergy, have found a way of integrating all that into religious practices. The parish priest is called to offer prayers of forgiveness with a view to protecting the deceased from damnation.

It is the parish priest who cuts the rope that binds the feet of the corpse when it is lowered into the grave. His action is not in danger of jeopardising the beneficent influence, for his office of priest enables him to dominate the dark forces.

775 /339/ The subject of resurrection and of the circle of life will be dealt with later.

/339 cont./

PROTECTION OF THE LIVING AGAINST DEATH AND DEFILEMENT.

For the Sarakatsani the angel of death is not Saint Michael who, according to the Orthodox Church, is charged with leading souls to the Creator, but Charon, known from antiquity. The imagination of the Sarakatsani (as, moreover, of all Greeks, for the belief in Charon's existence is common) pictures him as a warrior dressed in black, carrying a sword and mounted on a black horse.

Between Charon and the other "forces" which we have studied in magic there are resemblances, at least with regard to his behavior and influence. Thus, one can protect oneself against him by putting into operation the postulates of magic action.

During the wake, coffee without sugar is served, so that Charon "will not be tempted by the sweetness and come back to strike someone else." This interdict is prompted by the postulate of simple removal.

When the corpse is carried out for the obsequies, a glass or a plate is smashed on the threshold, in order to purify the house from the contamination of death. (15)

15. See Plato: Lois, XI, 937 d, conveys the belief that the dead contaminate the possessions of men. According to P.M. Schuhl: Ibid., p. 32, "contamination from the taint also strikes those who have lost their parents. This explains the exclusion from certain Sarakatsani rites of children one of whose parents is no longer living.

The glass or plate, as receptacles, symbolize water. In several regions of Greece and in Athens itself a jar full of water is broken. It should be remarked that for Christianity, death is not defilement, but a normal return of man to heaven, the land of his origin.

If one of the relatives who follows the procession turns around and looks toward the entrance of the hut, Charon will return, by virtue of the

/339 cont./
postulate of representation.

Under the table where a feast is served after the burial an iron object is placed. This will transmit its solidity to the participants and protect them from a new attack by Charon who is presumed to be loitering about in the vicinity. (16)

16. In numerous societies "iron keeps away all kinds of phantoms." See K. Birket-Smith: Ibid., p. 400.

/340/ ETERNAL REST AND THE CONTINUATION OF LIFE.

The interdependence of the living and the dead (mentioned briefly above) preached by Christianity on behalf of the repose of the soul and carried out by forgiveness, also occupies a place in the funeral customs of the Sarakatsani. Of course, our herders do not formulate their forgiveness of the dead in a simple thought or phrase, as suggested by the Gospel, which says that all contact with the beyond can be only spiritual, but they surround it with a complex ritual.

After the burial and in conformity with ancient customs of the country, a feast brings together, as we have said above, all those who were present. Food without meat is eaten and wine is drunk. Rice is forbidden for, as a symbol of rootedness and increase, it is in danger of causing evil to take root and multiply. The nearest relatives do not eat, and this for two reasons: the one social, the other religious. The people in mourning must not show appetite. And it is necessary to observe a fast for the repose of the soul of the deceased--a further manifestation of solidarity between the living and the dead. It is while drinking that a wish is formulated for the eternal rest of the deceased. Moreover, one chants anew the miroloia which emphasize distress at departure from this world and the deprivation of the joy of living, but which likewise express the conviction that life is agreeable even in the other world.

/341 cont./

up in the hair of the living and strike someone! For Saint Lazarus, psychoudia, small loaves that the women prepare the day before are distributed among the huts. Those /women/ who are not "clean"--a term that designates equally the women who are menstruating, those who have had sexual relations with their husbands the night before, and also those who have not washed their bodies--may not take part in their preparation. It is the eldest daughter of the family who must distribute /the loaves/, and if there are no daughters, the mother.

Now, from the description of this ritual one must conclude that the forgiveness of the dead by the living is expressed solemnly, collectively and with the concurrence of the Church which adds its forgiveness to that of men.

Nevertheless, through this same ritual we see the ancient pre-Christian beliefs about the life cycle integrated with Christian ideas, but re-interpreted in terms of the latter.

The symbolism of the acts and materials used is very clear, especially after our analysis of magic: earth (placing the body and the kolyva on the ground-during the interment the relatives must throw a handful of earth on the eyes of the dead person); grain (koluva--psychoudia); woman (weeping, preparing and distributing kolyva and psychoudia); resurrection of a person of distinction (Saint Lazarus), etc., all are harnessed to implement the ceaseless regeneration and repetition of life. The great creative forces of the universe will intervene, thanks to these acts whose efficacy lies in the postulates of mythic transmission and of representation. The deceased, like the seed, is put in the earth to disintegrate and produce new life. The sacrifice of /342/ the lamb during the funeral feasts adds its influence. A life is offered for another life which must one day appear to replace that which has faded out.

/342 cont./

Easter, etc.) a member of the Tséligato, preferably a woman, must go to church, attend mass and represent the group whose constant work prevents the carrying-out of this duty.

/343/ All the decisive moments of life, birth, baptism, marriage, death, represent so many occasions when the presence of a priest is required. Though authors like M. Skafidas (18)

18. Ibid., 1 107.

and Madame Hadjimichali, (19)

Fig. 189

/343 cont./

19. See Ibid., A. I., p. ρξσ'.

the first in connection with marriage, the second in connection with burial, state the contrary, we were able to confirm that no conjugal union is contracted on the mere /344/ decision of the Tséligas and without a religious service, and that no burial takes place outside cemeteries. The priest is furthermore called upon to perform his ministrations at the time of the seasonal migrations, before departure, so that "the way is opened" and also in connection with the building of a new konakia. On these occasions he performs the service of "the holy water," according to the Orthodox rite.

But the phenomenon which shows best of all the intensity of Sarakatsani religiosity can be observed when someone dies without the aid of the last sacraments. For fear that the deceased will face the Supreme Judge without having fulfilled the last duty of a Christian, Sarakatsani society prescribes that in a corner of the hut a glass of wine be placed which is kept for three days, in order to permit the deceased's soul to come and partake of communion! In this practice, religion and the omni-functionalism of Sarakatsani society meet, as we have seen it do above and in connection with the practice of lamentations for the Lord.

To all this is added a myth reported by C. Hoeg which shows the pride of the Sarakatsani "in belonging to the true religion." "At the time we first came into being," our herders relate, "God asked us whether we preferred money, beauty or Christianity. We chose Christianity, the Jews money and the Turks beauty."

Nevertheless, in our observation of Sarakatsani life other facts seem to contradict these assertions. By their own confession, no Sarakatsani was ever ordained a priest. This statement was repeated to us by all the groups studied and was spoken with an air of pride and malice! Then again, their folklore is very rich in tales and anecdotes satirizing the clergy. By way of example we briefly reproduce the following:

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--During the burial of a Sarakatsani, his wife, weeping, complained:

> Ah! Toward what country will they carry you "the four" (the bearers of the remains) and this black dog who barks? (the priest).

--Another time, a bishop visits a Tséligato and is served a meal. He refuses the bread, alleging that the bread is impure since it is prepared by women who are impure! The vexed Sarakatsani decide, without saying anything, to set a trap for him to test /345/ his sincerity. Shortly before his departure, they send onto the road the most beautiful girl of the Tséligato. At the hour of departure the bishop and the deacon who accompanies him mount their horses and set out. When they come to the girl, the bishop, dazzled by her beauty, calls to the deacon: "Get down from your horse, or would it be better if I dismounted? I think it would be better if I did." And, jumping to the ground, tries immediately to seduce the beauty! At this moment the Sarakatsani hiding all around, make their appearance armed with thorny shrubs, throw themselves on the bishop, shouting: "Hypocrite! You do not eat what you call impure bread because it is prepared by impure women! Then isn't it impure to rape young girls?"

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There is no doubt that these stories reflect the social ideas and social relations developed by the group we are studying and not a hostile or ironic attitude toward religion. People who are constantly struggling hard for their existence connot have a high opinion of individuals who apparently do not struggle, at least as seen from the outside, who earn their living by chanting and from the offerings of the faithful, who speak an esoteric language and who often do not succeed in leading a life in keeping with their teaching and with the things they advocate! The Sarakatsani venerate the priest as a representative or religion, but they criticize the man who hides under his cassock, as do all Hellenes,

/371 cont./

585 Sorrow at separation, modesty before the wedding night, authorized
533 sentiments come together with the very beautiful poetic form, which
152 testifies to the sensitivity of the Sarakatsani. Another song, a funeral
764 song, says:
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539 --The birds, the nightingales have deceived me...
They told me that Charon would never carry me away...
--I have built my houses of marble
The doors are of gold, the windows of silver
And the keys pure and splendid pearls...
--But I see from afar Charon who comes on his mount.
He is black, and his horse, his clothing are black also
--Charon come, enter, sit at my table and share my respast...
--I have not come to eat and to sing,
I have come to seek your soul.

Or again:

--Yesterday, the day before yesterday, I passed the church of Saint Demetrius...
--I heard young people lamenting
young girls sighing...
/372/--The young men because they had no finery...
And the boys not married wept
because they had not known betrothal.
--Oh! It is not fair that young men die
And that young girls are forgotten...

Profound human reverberations echo in these verses.

533 That art or the song have psychological, "liberating" functions for
152 human sorrow does not escape the Sarakatsani. A female informant from
154 Tchépélovo spoke the following lines to us:
124
539 "Songs are words that sorrow speaks. They would like to do away with the blaze of their grief, but this fire won't be extinguished."